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Book 1



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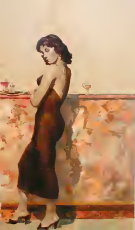
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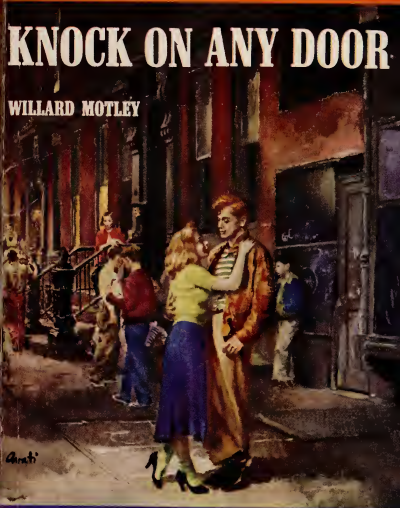


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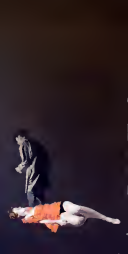
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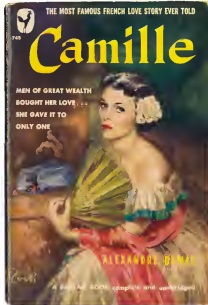
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Cordelia

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We celebrate National Flower Week, October 29th to November 5th, with this first story for *The American Housewife* by Susan Forke, rising young novelist—a story in which the language of flowers joins the call of romance.

He would come to the shop to order roses or a corsage for Mrs. Wheeler. With each visit Raquel's love grew deeper.

Flowers were her ambassadors. With them Raquel sent her heart to a man who had everything—except love.



The Red Carnation

FIRST love, after the crushes and exuberances of puberty, is always memorable, but rarely as romantic and satisfying as we hoped it would be. Happily, there are exceptions. Like Raquel's, for instance.

First of all, I must reveal my own status in the affair. I am the cook. I haven't always been a cook. My husband and I came out from Sweden years ago when immigration was still a great adventure and not a stern necessity. We loved the new country, and although we made ends meet we never managed to run up a bank account. When my husband died I needed to go to work, and I soon found out that one of the best-paid jobs I could get was a cook's job. Before I landed with Mr. Gregory, I'd been cooking from San Francisco to New York with different families who all outgrew me as the children got married and left home, and the big houses were boarded up or sold.

Mr. Gregory was a real find, although, in the beginning, many of his bachelor habits disturbed me. Formerly there was a butler-valet, too, who got in my way, but as Mr. Gregory's life took him increasingly away on business trips and into the social world, the butler-valet

was dispensed with. The local cleaning service looked after Mr. Gregory's clothes, and when there were parties I hauled waters for the evening, by the hour. The flower shop on the corner sat in a table arrangement for the buffet, and Mr. Gregory's secretary, who changed several times a year, wrote out the invitations to the guests.

Occasionally, Mr. Gregory, a burly, lean man with a threatening, dissatisfied look, forgot about the invitations and would ask me to write them out or phone up the list of guests. As I have an unmistakable Swedish accent I always avoid the phone, and although once or twice I did write out the invitations by hand the result wasn't successful. My penmanship is entirely different from the American penmanship. Mr. Gregory can never read it.

It was over Mr. Gregory's invitations that I got to know Raquel, a pleasant, innocent beginning.

For the past year she'd been the colorless mouse from the corner flower shop who brought up the flower arrangement on the afternoon of a party. Mr. Gregory ordered the flowers himself; he had. (Continued on page 97)

BY SUSAN FORKE
ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES AYOUB













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MICKEY SPILLANE



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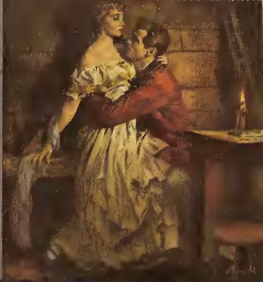
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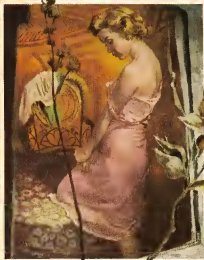
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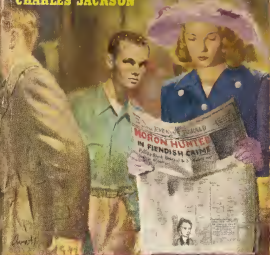
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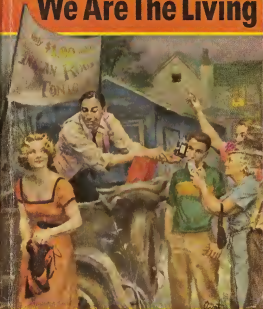


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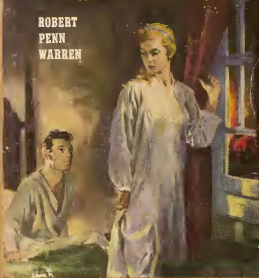
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A color illustration of a young man and woman in a garden. The man, on the left, has dark hair and is wearing a light-colored shirt with a red vest. He is looking towards the woman. The woman, on the right, has blonde hair and is wearing a blue and white striped shirt with a yellow vest. She is looking down at something in her hands. They are standing in front of a stone wall and some foliage.

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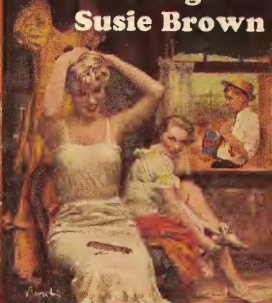


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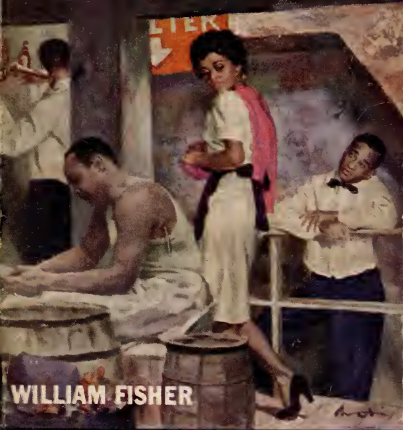


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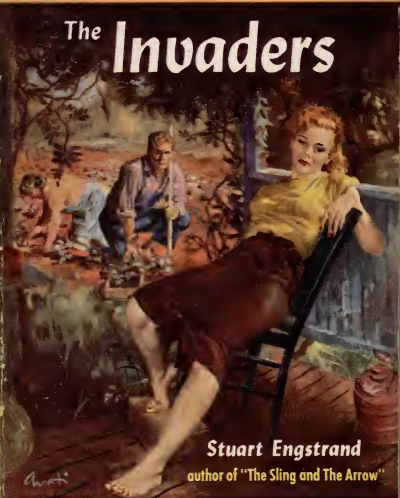
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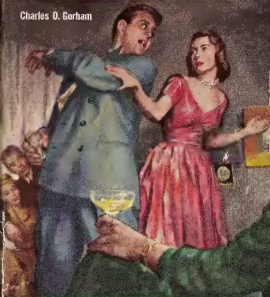
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